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PRINCIPLES

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OF

ATHEISM

Proved to be unfounded,

FROM

THE NATURE OF MAN.

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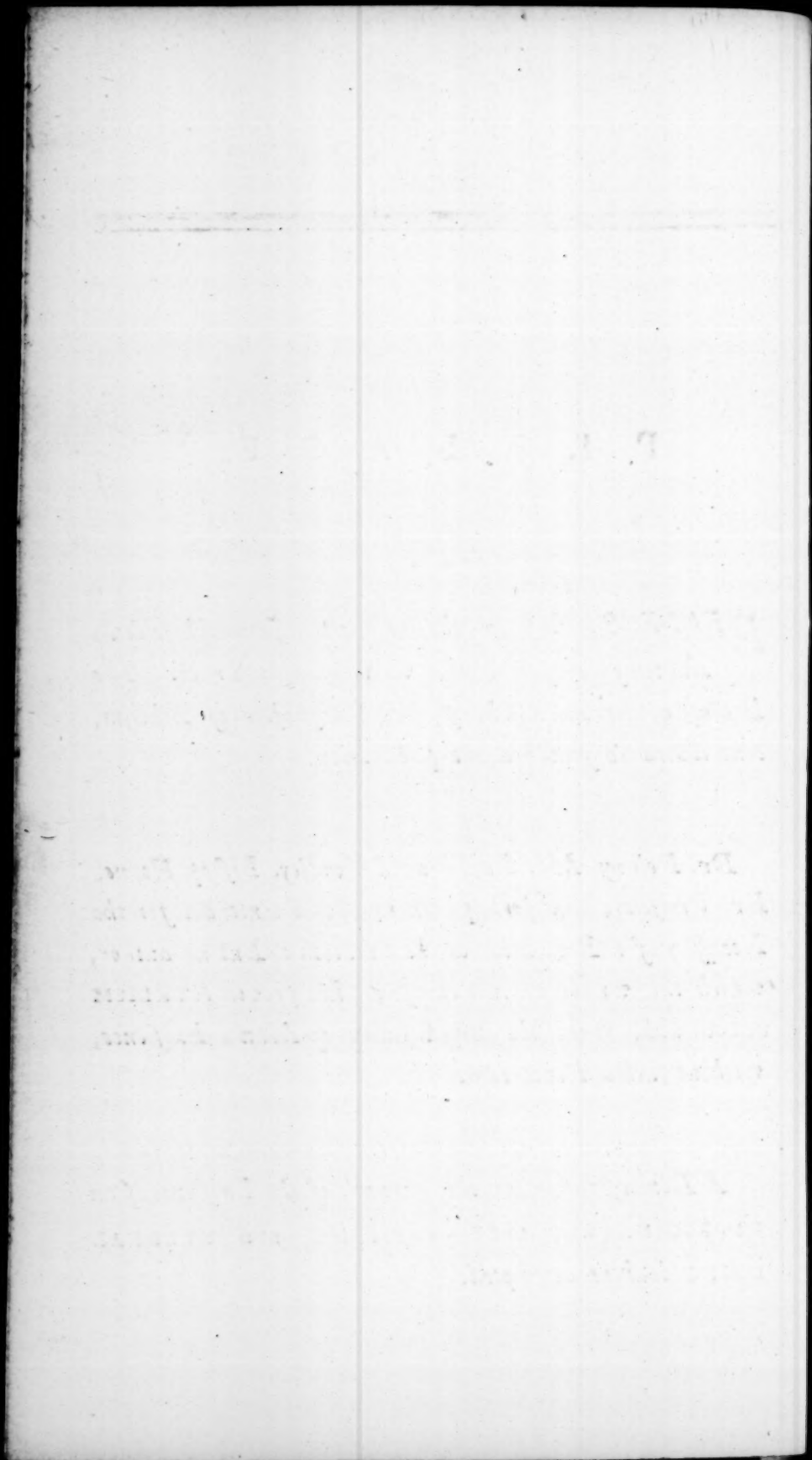


P R E F A C E.

REFLECTIONS on the case cited from Cheselden's Anatomy occasioned the writing this Treatise. The Bishop of London's Charge, on the subject of Atheism, contributed to forward the publication.

Dr. Delany, Mr. Ray, David Hartley, Bishop Horne, Dr. Priestley, and perhaps others, have contended for the Necessity of a Revelation at the Creation: But no author, which the writer of this can find, has proved ATHEISM unfounded, from the Impossibility of Man's Existence, without such a Revelation.

A Demonstration, on this ground, of the Existence of an UNORIGINATED, SELF - EXISTENT, and ETERNAL BEING is here attempted.



NOTHING hath so much agitated the mind of man, as the Proofs of the Existence of a Divine Being, and the Doctrines of a Revelation. In this age, when it is the fashion to deny all connexion between man and his Maker; and when the existence of a Creator is boldly denied, or silently disbelieved, it may not be amiss to call the attention of my fellow-creatures to the discussion of these subjects.

Unused to theological disputes, connected with no party from interest or prejudice, and loving all men alike, of whatsoever denomination or opinion, I hope the following observations may claim their attention.

There appears to me no proof for Revelation so much wanted, as one which should shew *the Necessity thereof from the Creation*: For, if there were no Necessity *then*, a Necessity *since* may not appear to many so clear, as if it could be proved from the first existence of man. The disputes of Atheism and Deism against Christianity seem to be founded on a presumption that no such proof can be given; and that the Scriptures are an imposture, begun and continued by artful men. Hence it may be deemed, by some, unfair to argue against Atheism or Deism from the Scriptures; and, therefore, I shall take some other ground, and argue from man as he is.

I shall attempt to shew, *that the first man, from his nature, was without the experience derived from his sensations, and had immediate Revelation given him*. And, in order to do this, I will introduce a Case, from Cheselden's Anatomy, of a man *born blind*.

C A S E.

" *An Account of Observations made by a Young Gentleman, who was born blind, or lost his sight so early that he had no remembrance of ever having seen, and was couched between thirteen and fourteen years of age.*

" Though we say of this Gentleman, that he was blind, as we do of all people who have ripe cataracts; yet they are never so blind from that cause, but that they can discern day from night; and for the most part, in a strong light, distinguish black, white, and scarlet; but they cannot perceive the shape of any thing; for

the light, by which these perceptions are made, being let in obliquely through the aqueous humour, or the anterior surface of the chrySTALLINE, by which the rays cannot be brought into a focus upon the retina, they can discern in no other manner than a sound eye can through a glass of broken jelly, where a great variety of surfaces so differently reflect the light, that the several distinct pencils of rays cannot be collected by the eye into their proper foci; wherefore the shape of an object in such a case cannot be at all discerned, though the colour may. And thus it was with this young Gentleman, who, though he knew these colours asunder, in a good light, yet, when he saw them after he was couched, the faint ideas he had of them before were not sufficient to know them by afterwards; and therefore he did not think them the same which he had before known by those names. Now scarlet he thought the most beautiful of all colours; and of others, the most gay were the most pleasing; whereas the first time he saw black, it gave him great uneasiness; yet, after a little time, he was reconciled to it; but some months after, seeing a negro woman, he was struck with great horror at the sight.

When he first saw, he was so far from making any judgment about distances, that he thought all objects whatever touched his eyes (as he expressed it) as what he felt did his skin; and thought no objects so agreeable as those which were smooth and regular; though he could form no judgment of their shape, or guess what it was in any object that was pleasing to him. He knew not the shape of any thing, nor any one thing from another, however different in shape or magnitude; but, upon being told what things were, whose form he before knew from feeling, he would carefully observe, that he might know them again; but having too many objects to learn at once, he forgot many of them; and (as he said) at first he learned to know, and again forgot a thousand things in a day. One particular only, though it may appear trifling, I will relate: Having forgot which was the cat, and which the dog, he was ashamed to ask; but catching the cat, which he knew by feeling, he was observed to look at her stedfastly, and then setting her down, said to puffs, "I shall know you another time."—He was very much surpris'd, that those things which he liked best did not appear the most agreeable to his eyes, expecting that

that those persons would appear most beautiful that he loved most, and such things to be most agreeable to his sight that were so to his taste. We thought he soon knew what pictures represented, which were shewed to him ; but we found afterwards we were mistaken ; for, about two months after he was couched, he discovered at once they represented solid bodies, when to that time he considered them only as party-coloured planes, or surfaces diversified with variety of paint ; but even then he was no less surprized, expecting the pictures would feel like the things they represented ; and was amazed when he found those parts, which by their light and shadow now appeared round and uneven, felt only flat like the rest ; and asked which was the lying sense, seeing or feeling. :

“ Being shewn his father's picture in a locket at his mother's watch, and told what it was, he acknowledged a likeness, but was vastly surprized ; asking how it could be, that a large face could be expressed in so little room ; saying, it should have seemed as impossible to him, as to have put a bushel of any thing into a pint.

“ At first he could bear but very little light, and the things he saw he thought extremely large ; but upon seeing things larger, those first seen he conceived less, never being able to imagine any lines beyond the lines he saw. The room he was in, he said, he knew to be but part of the house ; yet he could not conceive, that the whole house could look bigger. Before he was couched, he expected little advantage from seeing worth undergoing an operation for, except reading and writing ; for he said, he could have no more pleasure in walking abroad than he had in the garden, which he could do safely and readily. And even blindness, he observed, had this advantage, that he could go any where in the dark, much better than those who could see ; and after he had seen, he did not soon lose this quality, nor desire a light to go about the house in the night. He said, every new object was a new delight ; and the pleasure was so great, that he wanted words to express it : But his gratitude to his operator he could not conceal, never seeing him for some time without tears in his eyes and other marks of affection : And if he did not happen to come at any time when he was expected, he would be so grieved, that he could not forbear crying at his disappointment. A year after first seeing, being arrived upon Epsom Downs, and observing a large prospect,

he was exceedingly delighted with it, and called it a new kind of seeing. And now, being lately couched of his other eye, he says, that objects appeared at first large to this eye; but not so large as they did at first to the other: And looking upon the same object with both eyes, he thought it looked about twice as large as with the first couched eye only; but not double, that we can any ways discover.

“ I have couched *several others* who were born blind, *whose observations were of the same kind*; but they being younger, none of them gave so full an account as this Gentleman.”

Secondly, I shall select a case of a man *born deaf*, from the Philosophical Transactions, from Mr. M. Martin.

C A S E.

“ Daniel Frazer, a native of Straharig, some six miles from Inverness, continued deaf and dumb from his birth till the 17th year of his age. The Countess of Crawford kept him in her family, for the space of 8 or 9 years. After 17 years, he was taken ill of a violent fever; but being let blood, the fever abated, and had not its natural course. About 5 or 6 months after, he contracted a fever again, and had no blood drawn from him; and this went on with its natural course. Some weeks after his recovery, *he perceived a motion in his brain, which was very uneasy to him; and afterwards he began to hear, and, in process of time, to understand speech.* This naturally disposed him to imitate others and attempt to speak: The servants were much amazed to hear him: He was not understood distinctly for the space of some weeks: He is now understood tolerably well, &c.

Thirdly, I shall bring a case of another man *born deaf*, from the Memoirs of the Academy of Sciences of Paris, reported in 1703.

C A S E.

“ Mr. Filibien, of the Academy of Inscriptions, informed the Academy of Sciences, of a singular event which happened at Chartres. A young man, 23 or 24 years old, son of a mechanic, deaf and dumb from his birth, began at once to speak, to the great astonishment of the whole city. He said, that 3 or 4 months before, he had heard the ringing of bells, and had been extremely surprized at this new and unknown sensation; that afterwards there had issued from his left ear a kind of water; and that he then heard perfectly

perfectly with both ears : That he had been 3 or 4 months listening, without saying any thing ; but accustoming himself to repeat inwardly the words which he heard, and in perfecting himself in the pronounciation, and in the ideas attached to words : That at last he found himself in a state to break silence ; and that he spoke as yet but imperfectly. On this, several able Divines questioned him of his past state ; and their principal questions were concerning God, the soul, and moral good and evil. It did not appear that he had carried his thoughts so far. Though born of catholic parents, and going regularly to mass ; though instructed in making the sign of the cross, and throwing himself on his knees, as in the attitude of a man praying ; he had never attached to these actions any intention ; nor had he comprehended what others meant by them. He knew not very distinctly what death was, and never thought of it. He had led a life purely animal, ever occupied with sensible and present objects, and with the few ideas he received from sight. He did not even draw from the comparison of these ideas all the consequences which he might have drawn from them ; not that he was naturally deficient in understanding ; but the understanding of man, deprived of communication with others, is so little exercised and cultivated, that he thinks no more than he is indispensibly compelled to do by existing objects. The greatest fund of the ideas of men is in their reciprocal communication."

It will be necessary to observe, that the two last cases are not so distinctly traced and reported from the beginning, as Mr. Cheselden's ; and, therefore, some further opinion on hearing may be necessary to elucidate this subject.

" Previous to experience, we could not refer sound to any external cause ; far less could we discern, whether it proceeded from any object above us, or below us, on our right hand, or on our left. It appears to us self-evident, that if a man born deaf were suddenly made to hear, he would consider his first sensation of sound as originating wholly within himself." And, as loud sounds, to those who have lost their hearing and again recovered it, cause very uneasy sensations to the brain ; so sound in general, to such as never heard, must, on their first receiving it, cause like uneasy sensations ; and the uneasiness will be in proportion to the loudness.

of

of the sounds. The length of time which man may conceive sound to originate within himself we cannot determine; for we have no such time given, nor any observations on man's state for this time, in either case. Experience, however, would teach man, that the ear is the organ, and the sonorous body its cause; and he would in time learn to begin to hear."

Hence we are indebted to experience for our perception in hearing; and where sound is such as we have not before heard, further experience will sometimes be necessary to attain distinct perception.—Dr. Sparman relates, "That when he first heard the roaring of a lion, he did not know on what side to apprehend danger, as the sound seemed to proceed from the ground, and to enclose a circle, of which he and his companions were the center."

The sense of feeling too might be traced, and conclusions drawn therefrom, to shew the original and total ignorance of man from nature; to shew, that intelligence is now gotten only from experience; that it is not an effect, which could have been produced originally (as sounds, colours, or tastes) by figure and motion; for, if it had originally been an effect so produced, then it would still have been an effect continued to be so produced, of which we find the contrary by these cases. But if each of these senses shew the original ignorance of man; if every idea which arises in the mind may be traced to the impression of sensible objects; if a stock of ideas variously associated are necessary to be acquired; and if long experience and much time are necessary to produce memory, judgment, &c. as is proved by these cases—then the first man, at the creation must have been in a state similar to that of a child, knowing neither how to satisfy his hunger or allay his thirst; discovering not the innumerable dangers which surround him for want of judgment, motion, &c. and having *no possibility of existence* beyond a very short time, without the immediate protection and care of a *First Cause*; or without a Revelation of all things necessary for the present and to come from such Cause.

We have now shewn what man was originally from nature; so as to leave no reasonable doubt of his state: But as many men have denied a *First Cause*; some affirming, that man has existed from eternity, a *derived* and *dependent* being; others asserting, that man is an *unoriginated being*; and each maintaining matter

to be intelligent, eternal, and of necessary existence; we may shew very briefly and easily, from the cases before given, that these doctrines are all unfounded.

All, then, who affirm, that man hath existed from eternity, independent of a *First Cause*, either as a *derived* or an *unoriginated* being, may be thus shortly answered from these cases:—That his *impossibility of existence* originally and from nature only (which is generally supposed to extend to time limited) will extend to time indefinite or eternity: For nature having been always, or from eternity, the same; the *impossibility* must ever, or from eternity, have existed. It appears therefore evident, that man was a *caused* or *contingent*, and not an independent or unoriginated being.

But it hath been urged, against the principles on which the foregoing reasoning is founded, “ That the eyes of such adults as have attained their sight by couching, may have been diseased or weakened from long disuse;” and that, from instinct, man might have originally existed from the energies of nature only, without the necessity of immediate intelligence from any Superior Cause.

To vindicate our principles—to prove, that both infants and adults proclaim nature to be uniform—and that from nature alone, without Intelligence, man could not possibly have had continued existence, the following particulars are annexed.

Of the Organ of Sight in Infants.

From the ingenious and satisfactory experiments on the eyes, performed by Mr. Petit, and recorded in the *Memoirs of the Academy of Sciences* for 1727, it is found, “ That infants are unable to perceive objects for some time after their birth; that the inability arises from the wrinkles, from the too great thickness, and from the flatness, of the cornea; which proceed from compression in the womb, and the too small quantity of the aqueous humour.” These wrinkles occasion an irregular refraction of light; “and the cornea has not sufficient convexity to bring the pencil of the rays of light to a focus soon enough.” These defects are partly removed by the increase of the aqueous humour, which fills the eyes of infants, sometimes in one month, but generally not in less than five or six weeks, from their birth.

Of the Organ of Hearing.

The *membrana tympani* in infants is "covered EXTERNALLY by a thick mucilaginous web." "All the periosteum of the internal ear, especially that of the ossicula and tympanum, is, in infants, no more than a mucilage; and in them likewise the *membrana tympani* is thick, opaque, and covered with a WHITE SLIMY MATTER." This matter "dries some time after birth, and is separated into small parts, which come out with the wax in the ear," But before this white mucilaginous substance is dried and discharged, hearing cannot commence: And before the *membrana tympani*, or drum, is properly braced, which time and care only can effect, perfect hearing cannot commence.

Of the Organ of Smelling.

Similar observations apply to the organ of smelling. This organ being, as well as the eyes, compressed in the womb, its pituitary membrane must be thick and wrinkled; and the nerves of this membrane will consequently not have the necessary tension for conveying sensations to the mind. Could we for a moment suppose, that children are born with the sense of smelling, it must notwithstanding be allowed, that from this sense would arise pleasing or unpleasing sensations; and that these would appear in the face, the index to the mind: But the child smiles not, nor sheds tears for some time, indicates no perception, and exerts no animal motion, through the impulse of any perception, during this time. We may therefore conclude, as nature has given nothing in vain, that children have not the sense of smelling prior to experience; and that some original incapacity obtains in the organ of this sense, as well as in the organs of seeing and hearing.

Of the Sense of Feeling.

To the sense of touch the same reasoning will apply; but this sense has been proved, by Dr. Reid, in his *Inquiry on the Mind*, to be attainable only from experience.

Of the Taste.

Dr. Adam Smith, in his *Posthumous Works* lately published, says, "Before we can feel the sensation, the solid and resisting substance which excites it must be pressed against the organs of taste, and must consequently be perceived by them. Antecedently to observation and experience, therefore, the sense of tasting can never be said instinctively to suggest some conception of that substance."

It hath been observed of an infant, that he requires every kind of succour and assistance: He cannot move, support his body stretch out his arms, or lay hold of any thing with his hands. If abandoned, he would remain on his back or his breast, without being able to turn; and if left without nourishment, his spirits and strength would gradually be exhausted; and the duration of his existence could only be a few days.

The organs of sense are *instruments*, which for a time are imperfect; and, consequently, which the infant cannot employ; but, from nourishment, attention, and care, these are braced or extended; acquire elasticity, firmness, and polish; and the child, as his abilities increase, gradually learns, or is taught their use. The sensations too, for a time, are illusory, uncertain, and want rectifying every-moment: But, to rectify these, it is necessary to teach children: The infant discovers not the breast, but must be placed to it: his sight, hearing, feeling, smelling, and tasting, for *many years*, preserve him not: He has, therefore, neither of these bestowed upon him for PRESENT, but for *learning* what is necessary to FUTURE *preservation*. We find adults also, deprived of an sense; with no more instinct: Every thing must be taught, or learnt by them; and their senses, *prior to experience*, are not accommodated to their PRESENT *wants*, but for *learning* what may be requisite to their FUTURE *necessity*.

With our utmost experience, we often form *notions* of things unknown, very unlike the things themselves: But, prior to experience, *adults* have no *notion* of sensation. A lad, on first receiving light after couching, exclaimed, that some one had struck him on the face. Being excluded from light, he had no notion of it. He had no *ideas*, but from hearing, feeling, smelling, and tasting: He could therefore describe the first admission of light only by his sense of feeling; and, as he had never distinguished between his eyes and his face, every part was face to him. Hence then, although a body of light had suddenly affected the eye only, in the language of a blind man, he conceived that his face had received the impression.

Analogous to this was the case of Frazer before related. When he first began to hear, he had no *notion* of sound: His *ideas* were only from the senses before mentioned; and he could not describe the first impressions of sound by any sense but that of feeling. But as loud sounds cause very uneasy sensations to subjects who have just recovered from deafness; so any sound must have agitated Frazer so as to produce the like uneasy sensations. The *obstruction*

to his hearing *seems* indeed to have been *removed*, in his brain, by the *uneasy motion*: But, whether the removal of the obstruction caused this motion, or not, it is plain, that *mental perception* does not commence directly with the removal of impediments, and is not instinctive. The *uneasy motion*, therefore, may partly, if not wholly, be put to this unusual, and *not at first distinguished*, sensation of hearing.

These cases are, of themselves, sufficient proofs against any instinct appertaining to man; and the like reasoning will produce, when referred to other senses, decisive arguments against such principle attaching itself to human beings.

Man counted not his age before he received his being; and, of whatever size the first pair may have been created, or produced, we must consider them, from *nature*, only infants in experience. But the *impossibility* of man's existence, without sufficient experience, was ALWAYS IN NATURE, *prior* to his attainment of knowledge, whether we reason from time limited, or from eternity. The original *possibility* of his existence must, therefore, have been *future*, in time, and from *some Cause*—(for here cause and effect are perfectly clear)—and man must consequently have been a *caused*, or *contingent* being.

Should it be contended, that the nature of man might originally have been otherwise than at present; or, that the present race of men might have proceeded from a former, different in species, and of instinctive intellect—we answer, that no cause can be assigned for such a change of nature; no proof can be given, from record or tradition, of the existence of such a former race. We know, that man produces man as he is; that animals, or monsters, differing from their parents, beget not other monsters; and that one race cannot beget another, differing in species. We therefore infer, that men never had, *from nature only*, their senses instinctive: And, consequently, as man has originally these bestowed upon him not for PRESENT, but for *learning* what may be necessary for FUTURE *preservation*—as many years are required for attaining the necessary use of his senses—and as death, without a *First Cause*, must have overtaken the head of our race, much within the time necessary for his gaining sufficient experience—I conclude, from the above reasons, and by these consequences, that, whether we count from
time

time limited, indefinite, or from eternity, man is himself a *proof* that such *First Cause* must necessarily exist; or that man himself could not possibly have now existed.

Should the Atheist still contend, that some *other* body or matter is vastly superior to man; that it must have designed him, comprehended his wants, and by these causes, and to supply these wants, must originally have given him voluntary and involuntary motion, as well as necessary intelligence of things present, and of things to come! We answer, that if matter or body has this design, comprehension, power, and intelligence, the mind of man cannot stop until it gives it these attributes infinite. Matter also, in this case, must be considered independent, immutable, eternal, and a free agent.† And, therefore, the God of such Atheism, and that of Theism,

† *The mind of man cannot stop, &c.*]—For, as we perceive that something now exists; from thence we assert, that something, or some one Being, has always existed, independent of any cause, or of all will and power: For, had there been a time in which there was no Being—(and it being allowed, that nothing cannot give existence to something—also, that no Being can be the cause of itself, or be cause and effect)—then no Being could possibly exist at this or any other time. But we have found caused or contingent existence possible by the cases before given: Yet this would be impossible, were it an effect without a cause. A cause, therefore, must be found, not of contingent, but of independent or necessary existence. And hence there must be one Being at least, whose non-existence is impossible, absolute, uncaused, and therefore independent of any cause, and of all will and power, unoriginated, self-existent, eternal.

To the above we may add, that all the attributes or perfections of a self-existent Being are found infinite and unlimited, as they have the same eternity of existence with, and no limitation but in, their subject, which, as he exists independently of all will or power, can be limited by no will or power whatsoever.

To prove there is but one necessary or unoriginated Being, by the common argument, we say: Let two distinct Beings of necessary existence be supposed (as A and B); these must differ, to be distinct Beings, either in existence or in their attributes: But Beings of necessary existence cannot differ in manner of existence; necessary existence being such as must be, and cannot but be; and therefore but one: Nor can two Beings of necessary existence differ in perfections and attributes: For, as both have necessary existence, they must both have all the perfections necessary to such existence; and neither can have what the other has not. Therefore, A and B not differing from each other in existence nor attributes, do not differ at all; and are, or may be considered to us, as one and the

Theism, are unlike only in one respect, namely, that the first attaches what is esteemed blind matter to his God; and the second strips him of this property.

But man, or organized matter, hath been found not to have *necessary*, but *caused* existence; and, consequently, only *caused* attributes: And we might from thence have inferred, that *other* body had also *caused* existence, and therefore only *caused* attributes.

We have demonstrated below,* that matter or body is inactive, according to our general opinion of inactivity. Now, this inaction,

the same Being. See also Bishop Law, in King's Origin of Evil, remark g, and his inquiry, &c. against Jackson. In Doddridge's Lectures, you will find what hath been written on this subject, by many authors, with reference to many others.

This one necessarily-existent Being is a free Agent: For contingent existence is possible, by the deduction from these cases: and a Cause of contingent existence, or Necessary Existence, has been proved above. But *this Cause* cannot act *necessarily*; for then *contingent* existence *must be*, and consequently would be *necessary*, which is contrary to the deduction above mentioned. Hence then, *this Cause* acts not *necessarily*; and, as it acts *not necessarily*, it must act *freely*, and must be a *free agent*.

* Let a body at rest A be impinged on by another body B: Then A will resist B acting upon it; and, by this, some velocity will be taken from A and communicated to B; and B's loss is as the resistance in A. If inactivity had not been in A, B would have continued to move with the same celerity as it impinged on A; and would have carried A with it, whatever might have been its magnitude: But the body A, now in motion, by its inactivity still diminishes the velocity of B impinging upon it and moving it more swiftly by its still greater velocity. And hence, whether at rest or in motion, the body A is found in a state of inactivity.—The same may be proved of B in motion.—Further, the greater the resisting body A is than B, the more it resists B; and the less A is, the swifter it will move: And hence, the force of inactivity is as the quantity of matter in any body: Nor is this inactivity altered by the attraction of gravitation: For, let a body, removed with a certain force from A to B in a given time, be impelled, by the force of gravity acting perpendicular thereto in a line A D, to alter its direction. Complete a parallelogram with the lines A B and A D: Then from the general laws of motion, it will be found, that this body, impelled by two forces, acting in the directions of the two sides of this parallelogram, will describe its diagonal, in the same time as, by the action of the first force, it would have described the side A B: And so the same space, in the same time, and with the same force, is described in the direction A B, whether gravity act or not; and, therefore, the inactivity of body has no dependance on gravity.

which

which belongs to bodies (and on account of which they are *directed* by general laws of motion) must depend on some *Director* or *Cause*: For, body at rest, having no voluntary motion, must be moved by some force, to produce a change; and body in motion cannot rest, unless stopped by some sufficient power; consequently, matter or body is a *patient*, and not an *agent*, and, being thus fettered with these laws, cannot possibly be a *free agent*. And, therefore, some *Mind*, some *Producer* of motion, INDEPENDENT of matter or body, immutable, and of sufficient power and intelligence, must be admitted: And then matter or body also, as well as man, (by the note, page 15) must have been originally of *caused* or *contingent*, and not of *necessary*, existence: And so we shall reduce Atheism to Theism.

MIRABEAU'S ELEMENTS OF NATURE.

" We find the elements of nature (says the Author of the *System of Nature*) never perfectly pure, being continually in action on one another, always acting and reacting, always combining and separating, attracting and repelling, and are sufficient to explain the formation of all the beings that we see. They are alternately causes and effects; and thus form a vast circle of generations and destructions, combinations and decompositions, which never could have any beginning, and never can have an end "

We may grant for a moment, that these elements of nature have precisely the powers here asserted. The *How* or *Whence* we will not enquire into; nor will we ask, from the many throws made, how Chance originally came to hit so exactly, and not to continue her tricks. We will for the present allow, that, from the lowest insect to the human being, NATURE, by its energies, *blindly and mechanically* organized, or accurately and wonderfully *produced*, the males of every species—that IT hath also, though *without knowledge and design*, and only by such energies, constructed and organized, or minutely and astonishingly *vegetated* [we find no better word] the various similar and corresponding parts of the females—that IT hath likewise, *without design*, produced myriads of worlds, and given them laws; commanded systems to move, and stretched harmony and order through the universe. But, if we enquire into the amount of what is here granted, we shall find, that NATURE, without INTELLIGENCE and DESIGN, is only a *man of straw*, instead of a SUFFICIENT CAUSE: For, allowing NATURE alone to act, IT would act, without these, *blindly* and

and *necessarily* with confusion, which is contrary to observation and fact : Or, it would act, as we perceive by its operations, and as we find from the records of time, from *general* and *necessary* laws ; and then man must have been *necessarily*, from time indefinite, the same being ; and, consequently, could not have been produced by beings of a different species. But man having been always found the same ; and a *prior* IMPOSSIBILITY of continued existence, without *intelligence* from a SUFFICIENT CAUSE, having been proved from his nature ; this Author's *energies* are *insufficient* to explain the *formation* of all the beings that we see.†

THE LATE KING OF PRUSSIA'S CONFESSION OF FAITH—D'ALEMBERT ON CREATION, &c.

The late King of Prussia, addressing himself to Mr. D'Alembert, says, “ You begin by proposing an alarming subject ; no less than God himself, incomprehensible to a limited being as I am, and of whom I can form no idea, except by comparing him to an organized body, that enjoys the power of thought. I contemplate the whole organization of the universe, and say to myself, “ If thou art but a worm, being animated, canst think, why should not those immense bodies, which are in perpetual motion, be productive of thought much superior to thine ? ”

“ This appears to me very probable ; but I have not the vanity to presume, like the ancient Stoics, that our soul is an emanation from that Great Being, and which, after death, it shall rejoin : For God is not divisible ; and men are guilty of folly, which God is not. In fine, the Eternal and Divine Nature cannot, nor ought not, to communicate with perishable beings and creatures, whose existence has not the duration of a moment, when compared with eternity ! *Such is my Confession of Faith* ; and what I have been able to combine, least absurd, on a subject which has never been understood since the world was a world.”

† The arguments for Active and Almighty Intelligence and Power, against Matter and Motion, without these attributes, will hold good against the doctrine of Mind and Motion without such Intelligence and Power.

To all which we may say, we have proved that man is not an unoriginated being, and found the impossibility of his first existence, from time or eternity, without immediate intelligence of things present and to come from *some Cause*: Hence then, had *equivocal* generation ever taken place, either in time or from eternity, and man in consequence been produced, he would, from his nature, have been an *accident*; and, without such intelligence being communicated, must have perished nearly as soon as generated or produced.

The fundamental doctrine of Spinoza, (of whom Mr. D'Alambert seems to think, improperly perhaps, the King a disciple) viz. "*That the matter of all the things in the universe is but one continued Being, every where of the same nature, however differently modified, and endued with unchangeable, essential, and inseparable attributes—attributes of which he mentions extension and cogitation only, and calls them the principal,*" is totally void of foundation: For (not to bring against this doctrine, that there is a vacuum in the universe) we have found a part of matter, and that too an *organized part*, MAN, not originally "productive of thought."

But let us for a moment allow, that a tendency in bodies to motion, one or more ways, should be essential to matter; and that it may have some end: Let us also allow, that it was eternally guided by sufficient intelligence, inherent therein. Then, if matter modelled and preserved man, it would have been necessary to his original existence (as a part of such matter, and without experience) that this intelligence should have shewn itself, directly and sufficiently, in these cases. Man would have been shewn from these, as an organized part, to be in a capacity of providing for himself as soon as produced: The possibility of continued existence would have been clearly pointed out, and proved to have ever existed. But these cases shew the very contrary; and discover that man, wanting experience, could not originally exist without the immediate interposition of some *Active, Intelligent, and Powerful Cause*: And the proof is consequently against Atheism.

Moreover,

Moreover, as, by these cases, it has been demonstrated, that knowledge must have originally been revealed to man by *some Cause*, the *proof* of this Cause communicating with perishable beings need not further to be insisted on: And hence we have *demonstration* against *Deism*, as well as against *Atheism*.

I look towards the immense bodies of the universe with silent admiration! But the foregoing conclusions bid me consider them as vast theatres only, wherein are exhibited the divine power and wisdom! They are, no doubt, of nobler form, of more admirable construction, than man could devise. I *may* allow them a mind, which *may* be productive of thought greatly superior to mine! But we have proved matter or body to be of *caused* existence; and we know, that *intelligence is not always according to bulk*: For then the horse would have more knowledge than the rider—the tree than the man who fells it; and we might carry this comparison further, and shew greater inconsistency in this creed.

But it would be wasting time, when the *foundations* of Atheism and Deism are destroyed, and the truth of Theism established from the nature of man, to answer *all* the questions and deductions of the former. But let us attend for a moment. The King of Prussia (in letter 65th of vol. 11th) says, “*The system of the world created out of nothing is contradictory, consequently absurd.*” To this Mr D’Alembert answers, (in letter 68th) “*I first agree with your Majesty, that there is a common principle, which appears as evident to me as it does to you. Creation is absurd and impossible. Matter, therefore, is not to be created—consequently, has not been created—consequently, is eternal.*” This result, however necessary, will not accord with the true partizans of the existence of a God, who insist on Almighty, Immaterial, and Active Intelligence. But this is of small importance. We seek truth, and not their pleasure.” In p. 184 of the same volume, Mr. D’Alembert enquires, if “*It (Intelligence) has created?*” or, asks he, “*Does it only model?*”

To the first we may answer, that we have found matter or body of *contingent* existence. It is, therefore, an *EFFECT*, which *must* have received its being from or through a *CAUSE* of *Necessary* Existence; and consequently *must have been CREATED or CAUSED*, by or through such *Necessary* Existence.†

† See note, page 15 and 16.

Hence then, as we must believe either in a *creation*, or in the eternal existence of matter, it is infinitely more reasonable to believe the former than the latter: For creation by *some Cause* is only a *difficulty*, which our limited capacities cannot comprehend; but the eternal existence of matter, *without an Active Cause*, is an *absurdity*, which is pointed to by, and even *demonstrated* from, the *nature of man*.

From what has been said it will necessarily follow, that (notwithstanding any supposed *natural and moral evil*, or *evil of defect*, which appears to obtain in the world) the *necessity* of admitting a *First* or *Active Cause* will exclude every argument to be taken against the existence of *such Cause*, from a supposition that the possibility of *this Cause* and *such supposed evil* cannot exist at the same time.

We shall speak to Mr. D'Alembert's second question in what follows: But having given Mirabeau's Elements of Nature and the Creed of the King of Prussia, and *fully*, though briefly, answered them in the *fundamental* points, I beg leave shortly to state

THE PRINCIPLES OF THEISM.

It will be admitted, that man can construct instruments from the parts of matter or body, can give them motion, figure, size, and other properties applicable to a variety of uses. But, although he can construct such instruments, and comprehend their uses, he cannot give them intelligence, nor voluntary motion; neither can an instrument give itself these, nor any of the attributes which are before mentioned.

It must also be admitted, from what has been proved, that the several parts of matter or body *with which we are acquainted** have only CAUSED intelligence, motion, figure, and size; we may, therefore, call those parts of matter *materials* or *instruments*, to which *some Cause* has communicated those attributes in every *original* circumstance.

* It is sufficient, that our proof rests on what we are acquainted with. When mankind have MORE *data*, it will then be proper to consider what more may be drawn therefrom. In the mean time, we reason from what we know of the nature of man. Should any one bring conjecture, or hypothesis, against the facts herein stated, or against the reasoning drawn from such nature, we shall not attempt to answer.

But, there was *primarily* no necessary, but only a *caused*, connexion between any instrument, motion, figure, size, matter, or mere existence—and—INTELLIGENCE, COMPREHENSION, OR DESIGN: Yet, as man wanted *experience* or *knowledge* to continue his existence; and, as *matter* or *body* required *motion*, *figure*, and *size*; it is plain, that *some Cause* had, not only the *comprehension* and *power* to *model*, but the *power* also to give MAN *intelligence* and *voluntary* and *involuntary motion*, sufficient to lead to this *experience*, as well *involuntary motion*, *figure*, and *size* to *other matter*, for performing its functions.

But *this Cause*, who gave *intelligence*, and who (from his *perfect comprehension of design*) must have known the *present wants* of his creatures, must also have known their *future wants*; and, therefore, might give them *intelligence* of things *to come*, as well as of things *present*: For, if *some Cause* had not known the future as well as the present, then there could have been no *comprehension of design* in *any cause*; and CHANCE—that great being of Atheism—NOTHING—must be supposed to have produced *intelligence*, *harmony*, and *order*. But, throughout nature, we perceive no effect without *some Cause*—no ACCIDENTAL THINGS produced—no EQUIVOCAL GENERATION taking place. And, were we to contend for such *accidents*, it would be necessary to our argument, not only to shew the *possibility*, but the *probability*, of our opinion; neither of which can, I apprehend, be shewn. *These doctrines* of Atheism, therefore, are without GROUNDS, and consequently too absurd to reason upon.

Moreover, in the scale of nature, as man, with the intelligence given him, is infinitely superior to any instrument he can construct; so the *Original Cause* must be infinitely superior to man: For, as *this Cause* had not only the power of *modelling* matter, but the power also of communicating to it VOLUNTARY MOTION, as well as INTELLIGENCE OF THINGS PRESENT AND TO COME, to have communicated these, he must have had power and intelligence infinitely superior to any notion which can be conceived by man: And, although he call in the idea of the whole universe to his aid, he will not be enabled to stop, without admitting *this Cause* to be a *Being of Infinite Intelligence and Power*, nor without adding thereto all the other attributes which are demonstrated in the note, pages 15, 16.

But *this Being*, who can communicate *voluntary motion* and *intelligence of things present and to come*, who can bring what is termed *passive matter* into *active existence*, and who is a *Maximum*, not only of *intelligence*, but also of *power*, must have created or caused such matter : For, as matter has been proved to be of *contingent existence*, and is an *effect* which could *not* have been produced without a *cause*, a *Cause* must be found, not of *contingent*, but of *necessary existence* ; consequently, matter was CREATED or CAUSED by *Necessary Existence*—and, therefore, by *that Being* whose non-existence is impossible—by *that Being*, whom we consider our *Creator and Preserver*—THE ALMIGHTY GOD AND MAKER OF THE UNIVERSE.

IT has now been shewn, that man must have been created, that he must have been preserved, and that a revelation, or instruction, must have been given him, by God. Now, this revelation might have been given him at the creation, and have been sufficient to conduct him through life without farther intelligence : Or, it might have been given only as wanted.

In the first case, the first created being must have had revealed to him things present and to come, must have seen his wants, all the dangers to which he was exposed, and must have been shewn the means by which he was to satisfy those wants, and to avoid these dangers. In fact, what mankind now get from experience and instruction must have been originally received from revelation.

In the second case, man primarily may be supposed to have been taken by the hand, to have been conducted to knowledge as he wanted it through life; and to have gained experience, like his race, as his faculties expanded. But, in either case, or in any case between these, man, being taught by revelation, was to instruct his children, and these their descendants. A failure in this instruction would have broken a link in the chain of Providence : But a failure in man towards his offspring, from neglect or insufficiency, was possible, nay probable ; and, consequently, he might have left them without necessary, perhaps without any, knowledge
of

of the Divine Will.——Hence, divine instruction was still necessary to be repeated; and Prophets, or men whose minds were illuminated, might be repeatedly sent to the human race.——But the proofs of Revelation are well known. We have attempted an introduction to these—have demonstrated the original necessity thereof—and have shewn that Atheism and Deism have no ground from the nature of man.

FINIS.